

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3191

USIA WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

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SUBJECT: WEEKLY SAUDI EDITORIAL PRESS REVIEW

SUMMARY: EDITORIAL COMMENT FOCUSSED ON INTERNAL
ISSUES DURING PAST WEEK UNTIL VIENNA OPEC MINISTERS
KIDNAPPING HIT THE HEADLINES. ONE COMMENT ON DECLINE
OF US INFLUENCE IN UN. END SUMMARY.

I. US AT UN. JAMAL SA'ID IN DECEMBER 22 UKAAZ
SEES THE PAST THREE MONTHS AS THE BEGINNING OF
"THE DARK AGES" FOR THE US AND HER WESTERN ALLIES
IN THE UN SINCE "DURING THAT PERIOD THE THIRD WORLD
HAS OVERCOME PREVIOUS US DOMINATION OF THE UN."
REFERRING TO CRITICISM OF UN BY US AMB. MOYNIHAN,
SA'ID WRITES, "THROUGH OPPOSITION AND ANGER,
WASHINGTON DISPLAYS MISUNDERSTANDING OF THE ROLE OF
UN WHICH WAS NOT CREATED FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF
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APPROVING US POLICY AND INTERESTS."

II. KIDNAPPING OF OPEC MINISTERS.

KIDNAPPING QUICKLY BECAME PRIME STORY ON FRONT PAGES AND IN EDITORIALS. RIDA LARY IN DECEMBER 22 UKAAZ FRONT-PAGE EDITORIAL CLAIMS ACTION OF THE TERRORISTS DOEN NOT "SERVE THE PALESTIAN AND ARAB CAUSE" BUT IS AN ACTION BACKED BY "INTERNATIONAL ZIONISM AND THE INTELLIGENCE APPARATUS OF SOME MAJOR COUNTRIES" IN ORDER TO EMBARRASS THE ARAB NATIONS AND CREATE AN "ANTI-ARAB INTERNATIONAL REACTION."

AZIZ DIA IN DECEMBER 23 AL-BILAD DESAGREES AND CLAIMS THAT WHILE HE DOES NOT WISH TO BELIEVE THE TERRORISTS WERE ARABS, "I DO NOT KNOW WHY WE RULE OUT (THAT POSSIBLILITY) SINCE WE HAVE BEEN WITNESSING DISUNITY, INTERNAL SQUABBING, AND QUARRELLING AMONG THE ARAB NATIONS."

YOUSEF SALAH IN DECEMBER 23 AL-BILAD CALLS THE KIDNAPPING "APPARLLING" AND SEES THREE BENEFACTORS OF THE ACTION: (1) THE PLO AND THOSE WHO ARE AGINST THE SAUDI EFFORTS TO REUNIFY ARAB RANKS, (2) ISRAEL SINCE IT WISHES TO MAR THE PLO IMAGE PRIOR TO UPCOMING SECURITY COUNCIL DEBATES AND (3) OTHERS (UNNAMED) AGAINST ARAB UNITY AND THE GOALS OF THE PALESTINIANS.

DR. ABD AL-QADER SHARREM, ACTING MANAGING EDITOR OF UKAAZ, ON DECEMBER 22 ASKS THAT OPEC HEADQUARTERS BE MOVED TO SAUDI ARABIA "FOR THE WESTERN COUNTRIES CAN NO LONGER BE TRUSTED TO PROTECT THIS ORGANIZATION."

MANAGING EDITOR FAROUK LUQMAN IN DECEMBER 22 ENGLISH-LANUGAGE ARAB NEWS DAILY WHILE NOTING IT TOO EARLY TO ANALYSE THE NATURE OF THE ATTACK, SPECULATES THAT THE "PERPETRATORS OF THIS CRIME...MAY ONLY BE A CAMOUFLAGE FOR ANOTHER GROUP OPERATING IN THE NAME OF THE ARABS TO SENIGRATE THE REPUTATION OF THE ARABS...EVEN IF THEY TURN OUT TO BE ARAB NATIONALS, THEY MAY WELL BE EITHER HIRELINGS OF SOME SINISTER ORGANIZATION OR EVEN A STATE, OR ONE OF THOSE PROGRESSIVE, MARXIST, ANTI-CAPITALIST FACTIONS THAT SERVE THE INTERESTS OF NON-ARABS OR ENEMIES OF ARABS."

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